

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-6 under 35 USC 103 as being obvious over Okuhara, stating that Okuhara teaches the production of vinegar whereby conventional worts are mixed with nutrients for acetic acid bacteria and said nutrients include inorganic salts and yeast extracts.

In reply thereto and as is recognized by the Examiner, Applicant's invention is in the utilization of sea water in the production of the vinegar. Applicant's claims specifically claim the utilization of sea water in the method of making the vinegar. Applicant respectfully submits that Okuhara does not disclose utilizing sea water as part of the water in the method of producing the vinegar.

In view of the above, therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 9-14 are not anticipated by, or obvious over Okuhara.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

In view of the above, therefore, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered, favorably considered and the case passed to issue.

Please charge any additional costs incurred by or in order to implement this Amendment or required by any requests for extensions of time to KODA & ANDROLIA DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 11-1445.

Respectfully submitted,

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Application No. 09/618,306

**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**  
**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Cancel claims 1-6 without prejudice.

Add new claims 9-14 as follows:

--9. A method for producing vinegar comprising the steps of:  
absorbing water to a cereal as a material, said cereal selected from the group consisting of rice, wheat and corn; and

brewing said material with said water to produce vinegar, wherein at least a portion of said water used in said steps comprises at least sea water.

10. A method for producing vinegar comprising the steps of:  
steaming a cereal as a material, said cereal selected from the group consisting of rice, wheat and corn, with water; and

brewing said material with said water, wherein at least a portion of said water used in said steps comprises sea water.

11. The method for producing vinegar according to claim 9 or 10 further comprising the step of desalting sea water from a concentration of  $10^{-1}$  to  $10^{-3}$  %.

12. The method for producing vinegar according to claim 9 or 10 further comprising the step of adding clean natural water together with said sea water.

13. The method for producing vinegar according to claim 9 or 10, wherein said sea water comprises a mixture of at least two selected from the group consisting of surface layer sea water, deep layer sea water, concentrated sea water and desalted sea water.

14. A method for producing vinegar comprising the steps of:  
preparing water, a portion of said water comprising at least sea water;

mixing together the water and a cereal selected from the group consisting of rice, wheat and corn; and

fermenting the mixture until vinegar is created.--